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A WHITE SONG and a BLACK ONE

By JOSEPH S. COTTER

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Joseph S. Cotter

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By JOSEPH S. COTTER

LOUISVILLE, KY.
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1909

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WHAT ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CRITICS THINK OF JOSEPH S. COTTER'S POEMS.

About "Caleb, the Degenerate." A blank verse play in four acts. From the Poet Laureate of England.

"Swinford Old Manor,
Ashford, Kent."

"Dear Sir:

"Accept my best thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of 'Caleb, the Degenerate.' I have perused it with extreme interest and appreciation. It affords yet further evidence of the latent capacity of your long-maltreated race for mental development.

"Believe me, with every good wish, yours faithfully,
ALFRED AUSTIN."

From the Jewish Author, Israel Zangwill:

"5 Elm Tree Rd., St. John's Wood, London.

"Dear Sir: I beg to thank you for 'Caleb, the Degenerate.' I do not profess to understand it all, but I desire to express my appreciation of the passages of true poetry in which you express the aspirations of the Negro race for salvation by labor.

Yours in brotherly love,
ISRAEL ZANGWILL."

From the New York Dramatic Mirror:

"Joseph S. Cotter is one of the few American Negroes who have turned their hands to the making of serious literature. He is the principal of a ward school in Louisville, and he owes his education and his position solely to his own efforts. A play from such a man demands attention, particularly since the author has chosen to write of his own people and of subjects that lie close to his heart. .....The play brings into sharp contrast the ideas of the cultivated Negroes of the period, and the mental attitude of the depraved Negroes.....It is a unique and interesting addition to the dramatic literature of America."

About the "Sequel to the Pied Piper of Hamelin" and other verse:

From the South's Poet, Madison Cawein, Esq.:

"My Dear Mr. Cotter:

"I read with a great deal of pleasure the various poems you left with me the other day, especially the 'Sequel to the Pied Piper of Hamelin,' which, to say the least, is most ingenious verse.

"With best wishes for your future success, I am,

Very truly yours,

MADISON CAWEIN."

From the editor of The Strand Magazine, New York:

"Dear Sir: Many thanks for sending me your 'Sequel to The Pied Piper of Hamelin,' which I have read with keen delight. It is excellent in every way and ably sustains the true Browning style.

Very truly yours,

F. A. JONES,

Editor Strand Magazine."

From the late Paul Lawrence Dunbar in the Indianapolis World:

"Mr. Cotter writes in a variety of measures with great ease and beauty. He has already made a name for himself through his contributions to the Louisville Courier-Journal and the race press."

From Charles J. O. Malley, the Irish American poet:

"Paul Lawrence Dunbar, perhaps, displays more of a poet's stock-in-trade, blue skies, bird-songs, brooks, roses, green grass; Cotter, we incline to think, soberer thought, deeper philosophy and certainly a clearer spiritual insight. Occasionally, too, he has a graphic, Burns-like side-glance into realities that is startling. Thus he asserts:

'Lift up mankind as high's you will,
You'll find them mostly lackeys still,
Who live to act and act to drill
Themselves into
Such sycophants as gladly fill
Shame's rendezvous.'

"Of one thing we feel assured, Joseph Cotter is now doing work which eventually will win him a safe place in the literature of his country."

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A WHITE SONG

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the following lovers of both white and black humanity:

Hon. Henry Watterson,
Bishop Charles Edward Woodcock,
Col. Bennett H. Young,
Prof. E. H. Mark and
Mr. Robert E. Woods.

MY SOUTH.

(*To Gavin H. Cochran, Esq.*)

Men said thy hopes were buried in thy needs,
They pitied Death for wooing thee, my South;
They now behold in thee a life that leads
Through genius quickened at the cannon's mouth.

Thy idle strength, when pitted 'gainst thy fate,
Renewed the mansion, vivified the farm,
Kept timid hearts from growing desolate
By teaching valor through a missing arm.

Thou seest millions lurking in thy hills,
Thou seest comfort peeping from thy soil.
Thou knowest now that he alone fulfills
Self's highest aim who keeps in league with toil.

Thou earnest heirship to all elder worth,
Thou winnest guerdon of all times to be;
Thou holdest up thy wealth to all the earth.
There comes reply: "Alas, we did not see."

Above the hand whose mission is to smite,
Beyond the tongue that galls that it may snare,
Thou standest forth, peaked ever in the light
Of self-evolving self that cries: "Beware."

Earth's farthest bounds shall know thee as thou art.
Thy humblest sons make spoil of thy increase;
Our country, searching for its patriot heart,
Shall find it hid between thy love and peace.

Go star these ever in the public eye;
Go wed these ever to the public mind;
Go ever teach that sin and lethargy
Will leave a people shrunken, halt and blind.

I would behold in thee world-conquering ken,
Would fain be dazzled by thy steady flame;
Would cry aloud: "Thy women and thy men
Weave life a robe that puts past dreams to shame."

———o———

"MARSE" HENRY WATTERSON.

Who makes a law may force a means to curse,
Who puts it forth may blight the universe;
For what is man that he should say to man:
"Do thus and so, or feel the scourge and ban?"

Who builds a tower of crumbling theories
Must list his Babel in its mongrel keys;
For truth is onward, while a guess but hears
Its name re-echoed in a thousand years.

Who dares to whisper that his God and he
Are all-in-all of aristocracy,
Proves him a tyrant with a tyrant's power
And slays that tyrant in his boasting hour.

Nay, not of these is he of pregnant phrase,
Nay, not of these is he of toil-won bays.
Socratic spirit and Platonic pen
Win him first heirship in the ranks of men.

He sees as clearly as the Magi saw
That love is living, and that life is law.
He knows as fully as the prophets knew
Faith in man's struggles makes the strength of two.

My South that suffers and my South that bears
A triple measure of the Nation's cares,
Use but one weapon, and thy battle's won—
The love and faith and poise of Watterson.

GRANT AND LEE.

The South's the sin? The North's the glory?
Laugh out of court the hackneyed story.
The sin took root in the nation's heart.
And North and South played a dual part.

The North and the South wore a cheek of shame,
Till a life of woe wrought an earth of flame.
And who were the heroes? All who fell,
Whether North or South,in the nation's hell.

And who were the heroes? Great souls who fed
The nation's maw with the nation's dead
Till the nation's blood slew the nation's curse,
And made man free as the universe.

Neither Grant of the North nor Lee of the South
Shall link his name with the cannon's mouth.
Neither Lee of the South nor Grant of the North
Shall stand accused when the blame goes forth.

In the South's warm heart, on the North's just tongue,
A dual epic of peace is sung
With regret for the bond and hope for the free,
And a God-like love for Grant and Lee.

———o———

COL. BENNETT H. YOUNG, CONFEDERATE VETERAN, TO THE NORTH.

The Northerners have often censured us,
And we of Southern blood have held in scorn
Their manhood's value and their motive's aim;

But slaying faith heals not our country's wound.
This broader day, upon this border line,
Should pulse anew our nation's severed heart,
And hail the hand that clutches North and South.
And hail the tongue that choruses the two,
And hail the thought that draws our feet together,
And hail the deed that makes us one forever.

———o———

UNCLE REMUS TO MASSA JOEL.

Listen, Massa Joel;
I'se er callin' ter you;
Callin' in de sunlight,
Callin' in de dew,
Callin' whar you uster be,
An' callin' whar you ain't.
'Specks de Lawd dun called you blessed,
An' de angels calls you saint.

Heah me, Massa Joel;
I'se er mournin' fer you;
Mournin' when de day is old,
Mournin' when it's new,
Mournin' whar you uster sing,
An' whar you uster pray.
'Specks de worl' is full ob mournin',
But de heabens, dey is gay.

Meet me, Massa Joel;
I'se er comin' ter you;
Comin' wid er load ob sin
Fer de sinner's due;
Comin' whar I sho' kin borrer
Er little loan ob grace.
'Specks de Lawd gwine call us brudders
When He sees us face ter face.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM M'KINLEY.

Blessed art thou. Fate linked thee with her sons,
Ye form the trinity of martyred ones;
A nation's praise is jealous of its grief,
Therefore thy glory's day cannot be brief.

So poorly schooled in littleness wast thou
No party stamped its ethics on thy brow.
So future-sighted was thy leadership
Earth's farthest bounds hailed it with welcome lip.

Thy life work was to lift men far above
Mere selfishness to a pure country love.
Thou didst become, dwarfed not by creed or clan,
A modern miracle, a nation's man.

The good of yesterday we have unsought,
To-day lives in to-morrow's generous thought;
So the fanatic's tongue, the assassin's knife
Can find no way to chill a nation's life.

———o———

THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN SONG.

So long, O, Hermit Muse, so long
Didst thou preside o'er British song
Men came to think it grievous wrong
To roam elsewhere,
And take the rugged Western throng
Into thy care.

True Song, like selfishness and pride,
Is to the human race allied;
And, how soe'er it be decried,
Will spring amain,
And in its turn be beautified
By joy and pain.

So, circumscribing thy swift feet
With their abundance of conceit,
They sternly held it most unmeet
For thee to stray;
But, caged within their dim retreat,
Shouldst dwell for aye.

They forged on envy's anvil bands
To keep thy strong and affluent hands
From scattering throughout the lands
Song's jubilee.
Thou saidst: "Each great soul understands
Its liberty."
Straightway their envy's force was spent;
Straightway toil left embellishment;
Straightway soul-rifts and thought were blent;
Straightway the birth
Of Song whose own importance sent
It through the earth.

———o———

THE CONFEDERATE VETERAN AND THE OLD-TIME DARKY.

I seed him on de corner dar
Er-lookin' lak he's gwine ter war.
I wondered ef he thought it sin
Ter fight dem battles ober ergin.

De way he greeted de passers-by
Showed me de kindness in his eye.
De way he listened ter my woes
Tuk all de fight outen his clo'es.

BISHOP THOMAS U. DUDLEY.

A force was he in the thoroughfare,
  A light where gloom abode,
A prophet-seer, whose Godlike care
  Made precious the human load.

Ever the heart of trustful youth
  Kept his faith's longings real;
Ever the gleam of a truer truth
  Led on his fair ideal.

His brother's need was the Master's call,
  And his was his brother's tear,
And his the word or alms for all,
  And his the Master's cheer.

A word for man is a word for God,
  However blind chance doth play;
He saw this truth turn the chastening rod
  Into life for the common clay.

What message of truth would you have us bear,
  O, seer, as we journey along?
"I would have you lessen the whole world's care,
  Be glad, and so be strong.

"Since human aims flaw human creeds
  That narrow race to clan
Find God in universal needs,
  If each would be a man.

"Our darkening wisdom may not show
  Where flares the Eternal Dawn,
But this we know—if aught we know—
  They who live here live on."

THE BOOK'S CREED.

Reader, listen ere we go,
I will furnish line and page;
You must bring a soul aglow
And an eye that scans the age.

I am but a shadow sent,
Telling of a shape that's gone;
I am just an instrument
All mankind may play upon.

If you would behold the shape,
You must carve it all alone.
I, as shadow, will be crepe
On your door till you are grown.

All my myriad silent keys
Are responsive to the touch
That has lived the mysteries
Former masters knew as such.

I am but a skeleton.
Flesh and blood and soul and speech
Were the property of one—
Now the property of each.

If you see a Godlike eye,
Give it not an ancient name.
Would you stamp a wanton lie
On the helmet of your fame?

If you hear a charming tongue,
Do not think it from the dead.
This old world proclaims it young
Through your heart and through your head.

If I am a ghastly find,
  You are poor beyond compare—
You of empty heart and mind,
  Dweller in a world of air.

You are dead to all the Then,
  You are dead to all the Now,
If you hold that former men
  Wore the garland for your brow.

Time and tide were theirs to brave,
  Time and tide are yours to stem.
Bow not o'er their open grave
  Till you drop your diadem.

Honor all who strove and wrought,
  Even to their tears and groans;
But slay not your honest thought
  Through your reverence for their bones.

Reader, listen ere we part,
  Search to know and know to read;
And, by owning brain and heart,
  You will live this simple creed.

———o———

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

His country seared its conscience through its gain,
  And had not wisdom to behold the loss.
It held God partner in the hellish stain,
  And saw Christ dying on a racial cross.

What unto it the shackled fellow-man,
  Whose plea was mockery, and whose groans were mirth?

Its boasted creed was: "He should rule who can
Make prey of highest heaven and dupe of earth."

From out this mass of century-tutored wrong
A man stood God-like, and his voice rang true.
His soul was sentry to the dallying throng,
His thought was watchword to the gallant few.

He saw not as his fellow-beings saw;
He would not misname greed expediency.
He found no color in the nation's law,
And scorned to meet it in its liberty.

He saw his duty in his neighbor's cause,
And died that he might rise up strong and free—
A creature subject to the highest laws,
And master of a God-like destiny.

The thunder of a million armed feet,
Reverberating till the land was stirred,
Was but the tension of his great heart-beat,
The distant echo of his spoken word.

He speaks again: "Such as would miss the rod
That ever chastens insufficiency,
Must purge their lives and make them fit for God,
Must train their liberty and make it free."

———o———

GAVIN H. COCHRAN, THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

He felt the child-heart throb beside his own,
And question of its lot by right divine.
His answer was: "Thou shalt not ask alone;
I, too, will claim all things that be are thine."

He knew the child-thought in its wanderings,
Its timid ventures and its scattered might,
And gave his years to find the force that brings
Through childhood's struggles manhood's crowning light.

He saw that child-life on its winding slope
Must gaze a-back or scan the heights above
As teachers see in it the wide world's hope,
And God's true symbol of his matchless love.

———o———

GEN. CASSIUS M. CLAY.

"Give me an heir," the Century plead,
"With the brain of a man and the will of a god;
With a soul that will flash with the word that is said,
And a hand that will strike, 'though the heavens nod.

"When the storm blows not, and the way is clear,
And man is to man as star to star,
Let the sage come forth with his thought-bred fear,
And plans that are meek as the grass blades are.

"When soul meets soul and disdains to hate,
When thought meets thought and clashes not,
The priest may sweetly, sternly prate
Of a saintly way and a Godless lot.

"When weal must lessen the cry of woe,
And blood must sanction the will of heaven,
My heir must conquer the foremost foe;
To slay, faith-spurred, is the age's leaven."

So the Century hurled thee, a living flame,
To blaze thy way to the heart of man.
Now, at its end, thou art a name
That shines wherever greatness can.

AS IT IS.

With a rope of glass I am bound to time.
Its strength is the measure of life.
I move. It cuts. Stern Law says: "Mine,"
And my Soul moans: "Strife! Strife! Strife!"

A weakling I. God's prophets say
All share in His goodness still.
He speaks. I hear. Life acts. I slay.
Now whose is the slaying will?

A weakling I. My brother is halt
And stands in my destined path.
I pass. He dies for his faultless fault.
Now whose is the slaying wrath?

A weakling I. My brother is strong
And stands in my destined path.
He yields it not. I tarry long
As many a pilgrim hath.

On, and I fall by my brother's sword,
Back, and I die through his death,
I hold my ground with never a word,
A begging God for a breath.

The air I breathe comes over the dead,
The light of the sword is mine,
The stronger man has a prayer in his head
That says: "God, prosper thine."

I blunder about and know not how.
I fall and know not when.
The stronger man has kept his vow,
And God has kept his ken.

The corpse that rots, the strong man there,
  And my self-slain self are one.
So man has fared. So man must fare
  Till his little day be done.

Perchance foul worms in God's sunlight
  May house in my unhoused bones.
Perchance God's wrath in a world of night
  May measure my dead Soul's groans.

With a rope of glass I am bound to time.
  Its strength is the measure of life.
"Frail man is mine. All law is mine,"
  Says God. My Soul, whence strife?

———o———

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

All earth is a poet,
All nature doth know it,
Each firefly doth show it,
    Each frost-work doth rhyme.
Poor man who the fool is,
And prone as the pool is,
May yet learn God's rule is:
    All prose is part crime.

The dust that we tread in,
The swirls we are sped in,
The throes we are wed in,
    Were dust, dust and dust.
If out of God's treasure
There came not a measure
Of rhythmical pleasure
    In sibilant trust.

Thy gift was a yearning
That paradised learning,
And ended in turning
All seasons to Junes
Through death that caresses,
Through hatred that blesses,
And love that distresses,
And words that are tunes.

A Milton may ghoul us,
A Shakespeare may rule us,
A Wordsworth may school us,
A Tennyson cheer;
But thine is the glory,
Star-sprung from the hoary,
Flame-decadent story
Of the munificent ear.

———o———

COL. W. C. P. BRECKINRIDGE.

Great in the riches the world-brain has wrought,
Great in the gilding of a candid thought,
Great in the knitting of the headless throng,
Great in the music that outrivals song,
Great in his striving for his cherished clan,
Great in his welcome to his fellow-man,
Great in the working that is sacrifice,
Great in the longing that proclaims the Christ,
He has left us a heritage, mothered of Pain,
To be hoarded by mankind and given to mankind again.

THE TEACHER PRE-EMINENT.

To test Himself God spoke the heavens unfurled;
To please Himself He formed this nether world;
To warn the world He sanctified the Preacher;
To save the whole He called the inspired Teacher.

———o———

THE CHILD.

It is a story that it cannot tell.
  It sees a point, and then it sees it not.
Behold the only human miracle—
  The Teacher's leading it to grasp the plot.

It is a jewel lost in its own worth;
  The search is aimless, and the loss is twain.
The Teacher's absence, and a puzzled earth;
  The Teacher's touch, and all is found again.

———o———

THE OLD PEDAGOGUE'S WELCOME TO THE NEW.

I welcome ye, fine masters of today;
  Move in your track and renovate and save.
I am so wedded to the good old way
  Your theories were fitter o'er my grave.

———o———

TRUTH.

Truth is the unmixed coin God issues out;
  His wisdom mints it for life's tutoring;
It is the antidote for fear and doubt;
  And soothes man with omnipotence's ring.

DELAY AND TRUTH.

Delay in anger bit the sphere of truth,
And, in so doing, broke his wisdom tooth:
Therefore, it is, when truth comes rolling by,
Delay looks not, cowed by the memory.

———o———

THE LITTLE CHILD THAT LEADS.

("A little child shall lead them.")

Our earth-girt souls grow faint and gaunt and hollow,
And more and more unblessed our jarring creeds,
Because we fail to humbly, wisely follow
The little child that leads.
Our thoughts lack courage and our words lack meaning.
And less and less we value noble deeds
Until we are at one with Christ's esteeming
The little child that leads.
Toil-deepened truth is ever clearer, dearer,
All life is holier for its common needs,
As we in brotherly thought and act draw nearer
The little child that leads.

———o———

CHICAGO.

You meet Chicago ere you meet it;
You greet Chicago ere you greet it.
You wonder but to wonder
How life is life and death together,
How man and beast and work and weather
Are blundering without a blunder.

You see Chicago, if you see it,
With sphere-bound eyes that wholly free it
From forceless force's commanding.
You see its greatness throb in centers;
You see the doom of him who enters,
A-coining hope for understanding.

Chicago woos time's active hour
And turns its ashes into power
That makes to-day to-morrow,
Quickened with all life's stress compresses,
Lightened with all life's forethought blesses,
And burdened with a sorrow's sorrow.

———o———

THOMAS MOCK.

O, plain man, plain man, double manned,
Through love of home and love of peace,
And love that opes a clinched hand
And hastens sorrow's sure surcease—
Thy plainness charmed me to the end,
My neighbor-friend.

O, faithful son who gladly stood
A guard at the parental door,
And let naught in or out that would
Not brace its portals more and more,
Thy sonship spurred me to the end,
My neighbor-friend.

O, neighbor, always neighborly,
And dowered with a gift that leads
The neighbor-eye to quickly see
A neighbor's plight, a neighbor's needs,
Thy neighbor-spirit knew no end,
My neighbor-friend.

O, spirit touched by childhood's woe,
  O, spirit moved by childhood's glee,
O, spirit that did gladly go
  Unto thy death for charity,
Thy aim shall lead me to the end,
    My neighbor-friend.

The man who finds his native worth,
  And holds it in life's sun to leaven
Is great enough to sweeten earth
  And good enough to merit heaven.
This thought did cheer thee to the end,
    My neighbor-friend.

———o———

To President Taft's Young Son, Master Charlie, On Sending Him a Copy of "The Sequel to the Pied Piper of Hamelin."

Master Charlie, read my story
Of the Piper in his glory,
  And bethink you how his striped,
Ancient vestments looped and dangled
From his limbs that crooked and sprangled,
  As he piped, piped, piped.

Master Charlie, see the city,
Odd and quaint as oldest ditty,
  And bethink you, little man,
How the children laughed and whistled
Through the streets, by deeds epistled,
  As they ran, ran, ran.

Master Charlie, see the people
Grave and grim as church's steeple,
  As they reached the magic hill,

And bethink you how they wound it
Time and time until they found it
To be still, still, still.

Master Charlie, see the Council
That refused to pay an ounce till
Every rat was out of sight;
But I'm telling you the story
Of the Piper in his glory,
As I write, write, write.

———o———

SEQUEL TO THE "PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN."

(*To Thomas G. Watkins, Esq.*)

The last sweet notes the piper blew
Were heard by the people far and wide;
And one by one and two by two
They flocked to the mountain-side.

Some came, of course, intensely sad,
And some came looking fiercely mad,
And some came singing solemn hymns,
And some came showing shapely limbs,
And some came bearing the tops of yews,
And some came wearing wooden shoes,
And some came saying what they would do,
And some came praying (and loudly too),
And all for what? Can you not infer?
A-searching and lurching for the Pied Piper,
And the boys and girls he had taken away.
And all were ready now to pay
Any amount that he should say.

It seems that just relentless Fate
Ransacks her ever ample store,

And issues out the roughest ore
To all who basely hesitate.

The people stood at the mountain-side,
And listened to hear the merry strain
That gathered them from far and wide,
But they listened all in vain.
And if they could have heard his music,
Why some of them were really too sick
To tell just what his notes were saying,
Or know it was the piper playing.
Their heads were many, but their hearts were one;
And so the thoughts that came and went
Served only to kindle their discontent
Into a flame ere the set of sun.

Some thought that they could open wide
Another portal in the mountain-side
And then that they could pass right through
And find the children and piper, too.

At last a stalwart man arose
And spoke as one who would interpose:
"Rouse up, good sirs, like gallant people,
And quake no longer with consternation;
But ring the bells from every steeple,
And summon the mayor and corporation."

The bells rang out as never before
Within that ancient city;
They seemed to tell it o'er and o'er—
To tell that tale of pity,
And steadily the angry people
Stood gazing at each lofty steeple.

The stalwart man cried out again:
"Death's servant is procrastination;

Your grief and tears are all in vain,
Go, summon the mayor and corporation."
The people started in twos and threes
To seek the mayor and corporation,
And found them all upon their knees,
Imploring expiation.

The mayor winked and the mayor blinked;
And the councilmen, they listened,
The mayor's eyes gazed at the skies,
And the councilmen's eyes, they glistened.

"You are all to blame," the people cried,
With a look of detestation,
"You know full well that you have lied,
And sold our rising nation.

"As enemies we hold you all,
Despite your loud lamenting;
Upon your recreant heads shall fall
The burden of repenting.
"Through you the little ones we nursed
Were taken we don't know where to;
"Through you our city has been cursed—
Deny it if you dare to.

"And you shall know that parleying
With that outlandish piper
Shall be to you as deep a sting
As that of any viper."
They mayor bowed low, and then said, "Oh!"
And the councilmen said, "What is it?"
The mayor grew red and huskily said:
"I do not like this visit."
The mayor's teeth clattered, and the mayor's tongue chattered,

And the councilmen's did also;
The mayor floundered, and the mayor wondered
How a brave man's voice could fall so.

The mayor did sup from no golden cup
That he could drown his grief in;
The councilmen saw with deepest awe
Nothing to find relief in.
The mayor looked straight at the massive gate
(And it was a look of pity),
Then turned his face to leave the place,
And bid farewell to the city.

The councilmen turned, and their red cheeks burned,
As the bells rang out in the steeple;
And they heard the beat of a thousand feet,
And saw the angry people,
Who came by dozens and scores that way,
Intent upon their human prey.
They hadn't a single word to say,
But, oh, it was a woeful day
For the mayor whose hair was turning gray.
Some seized the mayor by the throat
As roughly as they could do,
And tore the buttons off his coat
To show him what they would do
Unless he eased their mental strain
By finding the boys and girls again.
And some arrested the corporation,
And poured into their ears
So free a strain of denunciation
It roused their latest fears,
Till one and all wished through and through
The piper would come and take them too.
And then they marched through that ancient city,
With the mayor right before them,
And the corporation who sang a ditty

That threw a madness o'er them,
And stirred their ire so it crept out
And put their better thoughts to rout.

"Let's drive them into the Weser waters,"
Some cried out angrily
"Unless they find our sons and daughters,
And bring them back this way."
"Agreed! agreed!" said high and low,
"Right into the waters they shall go!"

They marched them down to the river's brink,
And roughly drove them in;
But before the shortest one could sink
An inch above his chin
They heard a muffled deafening note,
Such as might come from a lion's throat.
And all the motly crowd grew mute,
For it was a blast from the piper's flute.

He stood on the edge of Koppleberg hill
And blew till the feet of the people grew still,
And those of the mayor and corporation
Began to move as by incantation.
He took the flute from his honeyed lips
And pressed it between his finger tips,
And straightway a vapor began to rise
That tickled the nose and blinded the eyes;
And when the people could see again
They looked for their victims all in vain,
And all about it they ever knew
Was that the piper had drawn from view,
And the mayor and corporation too.
How often is the tide of sin
Averted ere it reaches us
By ways just as mysterious
As those in the case of Hamelin!

The people went to their homes as mute
As since has been the piper's flute,
And never was known to even dispute,
  Among themselves or others,
As to how such things could come about,
Or whether or not they had a doubt
Concerning how they would turn out
  For fathers, sons, or mothers.

The years passed by, as years will do,
  When trouble is the master,
And always strives to bring to view
  A new and worse disaster;
And Sorrow, like a sorcerer,
  Spread out her melancholy pall
  So that its folds enveloped all,
And each became her worshipper.
And not a single child was born
  Through all the years thereafter;
If words sprang from the lips of scorn
  None came from those of laughter.
So hour by hour, and day by day,
The city's inmates passed away,
And left but one, then old and gray,
And that was he the piper left
  That fatal day behind him,
Of whatsoe'er he was bereft,
  He never strove to find him.
But wisely let the prowler go
  Where'er his whim might take him,
And kiss his magic flute and blow
  For all who might forsake him.

Alas, alas, there came a time
Too sad for even the saddest rhyme,
When this one mortal became immortal,
And flitted away through the heavenly portal.

Without a soul outside or in
Stood poor deserted Hamelin,
Devoid for once of human sin.

You know a message went to Rat-land
  By that strong rat that swam the Weser;
And lo! a race of rats was at hand
  Outnumbering all the hosts of Cæsar.
They came by ones and twos and threes,
And then in larger companies—
As single fours and double scores
  And hundreds up to fifty,
    And thousands up to twenty-five,
    And all seemed more and more alive,
  And hence were double thrifty.

They swarmed into the highest towers,
And loitered in the fairest bowers,
And sat down where the mayor sat,
And also in his Sunday hat;
And gnawed revengefully thereat.
With rats for mayor and rats for people,
With rats in the cellar and rats in the steeple,
With rats without and rats within,
Stood poor, deserted Hamelin.

A BLACK SONG

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the following lovers of both black and white humanity:

Dr. Booker T. Washington,
Rector Leroy Ferguson,
Dr. C. H. Parrish,
Alexander Morris, Esq.,
Rev. Thomas F. Blue and
Prof. John H. Jackson.

DR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON TO THE NATIONAL NEGRO BUSINESS LEAGUE.

'Tis strange indeed to hear us plead
For selling and for buying
When yesterday we said: "Away
With all good things but dying."

The world's ago, and we're agog
To have our first brief inning;
So let's away through surge and fog
However slight the winning.

What deeds have sprung from plow and pick!
What bank-rolls from tomatoes!
No dainty crop of rhetoric
Can match one of potatoes.

Ye orators of point and pith,
Who force the world to heed you,
What skeletons you'll journey with
Ere it is forced to feed you.

A little gold won't mar our grace,
A little ease our glory.
This world's a better biding place
When money clinks its story.

———o———

TUSKEGEE.

Tuskegee blazes in the nation's eye;
Tuskegee lifts plain labor to the sky;
Tuskegee grounds and towers prosperity.

Tuskegee started as an uncouth name;
Tuskegee stood a race's scorching blame;
Tuskegee leads that race to deathless fame.

Tuskegee sees the merit in a clod;
Tuskegee meets false worth with spur and rod;
Tuskegee lifts the Negro nearer God.

Tuskegee trains the hand to train the head;
Tuskegee lives the laws the ancients read;
Tuskegee saves the living that are dead.

Tuskegee wins all foemen, one by one;
Tuskegee stars the work that is begun;
Tuskegee's other name is Washington!

———o———

NED'S PSALM OF LIFE FOR THE NEGRO.

Dis is Ned dat am er-speakin',
  Wid no wuds dat's cute an' fine.
Dis is Ned dat am er-seekin'
  Light fur dis heah race o' mine.

I don' know as I'se er prophit—
  Ef I is, I prophersy—
Smart folks, don' you dar ter scoff it:
  Dis race feelin's gwine ter die.

'Tain't er thing dat has er color—
  I'se gwine lib ter see it ain't.
Hit goes 'long wid black an' yeller,
  Kase you's not er wukin' saint.

When you wuks so dat de folks is
  Boun' ter lib by whut you does,

All dey feelin's an' dey jokes is
Fur de man dat once you wuz.

Folks will 'cept you when you takes 'em
By supplyin' all dey needs;
Dey will paint you when you makes 'em
Jes' de color o' yo' deeds.

Atter while dey will be treatin'
You de bery bes' dey can,
An' you'll nebber 'gret de meetin'
Wid yo' brudder feller man.

Yes, dey's feelin' 'twixt de races,
An' hit's gwine ter las' until
We jes' wuks ourselves ter places
Udder folks has got ter fill.

Dis is Ned dat am er-speakin'—
Smart folks, don' you dar ter scorn—
I'se er-prayin' an' er-seekin'
Ways ter let dis race be born.

I'se got faith 'nuff in de Marster
Fur ter know He'll do His part;
Ef we stomps out dire disarster
Wid er wukin' brain an' heart.

———o———

THE NEGRO'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

On this, Thy natal day, O God,
Make me forget each ancient care
That erstwhile loomed where'er I trod,
And robbed me of thy generous fare.

Frail man is great—and doubly great—
So long as he can gaze a-down
The path that wrecked his sole estate
And speak it just without a frown.

It must be true that man is wise
When he from out the shattered past
Plucks keys to ope the paradise
That holds his future hard and fast.

This is Thy spirit, earthly housed,
This is Thy vision, earthly kenned.
With these at hand I am aroused
To chase life's phantom to the end.

I gaze upon my fellow man,
I think that I am such as he.
O, God, if Thou hast made a span
To bridge his greater self to me,

I do not ask the reason why,
I do not ask the logic's course;
I turn me from an alien sky
To battle with an alien's force.

If shadows are the substance here,
If God to man is naught to God,
Hope looks a-back, faith sinks in fear,
And vengeance sways Heaven's chastening rod.

A little space, a little breath,
I ask no more. I would not take
A feather from the wings of Death
To trick with Life for my poor sake.

I do not ask for vision clear
Enough to pierce the future's maze,

I only ask a heart sincere,
And sense enough to crown my days.

Now, grant, O, God, Thy servant's prayer,
Grant it as Thou dost wisely see;
Then, as the seasons roll, my fare
Shall take the name of charity.

———o———

THE OLD NEGRO TEACHER TO THE NEW.

I has bin er backwoods teacher
In my day.
I has bin er jackleg preacher
In er way.
I has hustled frum de jump,
I has 'rated frum de stump
An' I has full many er bump
Frum de fray.

I has l'arned ter fret an' clamer
Ober slights.
I has l'arned ter read de grammer
Ob my rights.
I has also l'arned ter go
'Bout dis l'arnin' sorter slow;
An' I'se proud ter lib ter know
Dese delights.

Ask me questions 'bout my knowin'
In de books?
Ask de rooster 'bout his crowin'
While he cooks.
I jes' called de chillens in,
An' I sed you mus'n't sin,
An' straightway de change begin
In dey looks.

Dis you say wuz no beginnin'
Ob er school?
Let me tell you all dat sinnin'
Meks de fool.
When our fools thinks dey is bigger
Kase dey l'arns ter read an' figger
Jes' es well go pull er trigger
Till dey's cool.

'Course I had no way ter teach 'em
How ter parse,
An' I had no way ter reach 'em
Up ter Mars.
But dat blueback spellin' book
An' de strap upon de hook
An' my daily business look
Left what? Scars?

Better gib de boys er flayin'
Now an' den
Dan ter see 'em daily strayin'
Ter de "pen."
Fer de youngsters dat I sees
Libin' 'bout heah at dey ease
Won't be wuf two black-eye peas
In de en'.

You has bin ter school an' college
I suppose.
An' you has er lot ob knowledge
Dat you knows.
Will you let de few dat's tryin'
Jine de many dat is dyin'
An' so heah ten millun cryin'
Ob dey woes?

Younger brudders, you is leadin'
Us ter-day.
May we heah no fur-fetched pleadin'
Dat mought slay;
Fer you knows dat we mus' be
Whar de white man's eye kin see
An' his cash is scattered free
In our way.

———o———

THE NEGRO CHILD AND THE STORY BOOK

See it settin' dar alone,
Gently swayin' to an' fro,
Readin' in an undertone
'Bout de things of long ago?

See its eyes a-fillin' up?
Heah it giggle now an' den?
It is sippin' frum de cup
Dat has nourished mighty men.

See dat frown upon its brow?
See dat curl upon its lip?
It is fightin' frum de prow
Of an ancient battleship.

It is winnin' wid its frien'.
It is losin' to its foes.
It has quitted ere de en',
An' is lost in polar snows.

Bless its soul, it's free ag'in,
An' is journeyin' afar.
All creation is a-spin
An' its kerridge is er star.

See it still as tho' asleep?
Heah it sigh a heavy sigh?
It is thinkin' 'bout de sheep
Dat'll be parted by-an'-by.

See dat smile creep frum its mouth
Till it kivers up its face?
It is picturin' de South
As a lastin' bidin' place.

When it looks frum left to right
An' is scratchin' of its head,
Jes' be sure it wants de light
For to see it safe in bed.

When its thoughts are true as gol',
An' its ways are cute as wit,
It has read what Remus tol',
It has lived what Aesop writ.

When true rhythm sways its heart,
An' a jingle primes its tongue,
It is Dunbar's subtle art
Frum a joyous scabbard flung.

When its spirit dares to dare,
An' its darin' dares to win,
It is thrivin' on de fare
Of de story tol' widin.

Let us buil' roun' de story-book,
Let us buil' for de story-child,
Lest our worl' space shrink to a nook,
An' our lives grow gross and wild.

THE NEGRO'S EDUCATIONAL CREED.

The Negro simply asks the chance to think,
To wed his thinking unto willing hands,
And thereby prove himself a steadfast link,
In the sure chain of progress through the lands.

He does not ask to loiter and complain
While others turn their life blood into worth.
He holds that this would be the one foul stain
On the escutcheon of this brave old earth.

He does not ask to clog the wheels of State
And write his color on the Nation's Creed.
He asks an humble freedman's estimate,
And time to grow ere he essays to lead.

———o———

THE LOAFING NEGRO.

Whut's use wukin' when you kin
Libe lak white folks 'out dey care?
Eat lak dem an' dress up in
Same fine clo'es dey useter wear?

Chicken leg an' good hambone,
Homemade bread an' pasty pie,
Yo' gal brings ter you erlone:
No use wukin' till you die.

When you's full jes' walk erbout
Lak de worl' wuz made fer you,
An' hit could not run widout
You libed lak you wants ter do.

Matters not whut cums er goes,
Matters not who's up er down,
All you need's er suit ob clo'es
An' er chance ter do de town.

THE DON'T-CARE NEGRO.

Neber min' what's in your cran'um
So your collar's high an' true.
Neber min' what's in your pocket
So de blackin's on your shoe.

Neber min' who keeps you comp'ny
So he halfs up what he's tuk.
Neber min' what way you's gwine
So you's gwine away frum wuk.

Neber min' de race's troubles
So you profits by dem all.
Neber min' your leaders' stumblin'
So you he'ps to mak' dem fall.

Neber min' what's true to-morrow
So you libes a dream to-day.
Neber min' what tax is levied
So it's not on craps or play.

Neber min' how hard you labors
So you does it to de en'
Dat de judge is boun' to sen' you
An' your record to de "pen."

Neber min' your manhood's risin'
So you habe a way to stay it.
Neber min' folks' good opinion
So you habe a way to slay it.

Neber min' man's why an' wharfo'
So de worl' is big an' roun'.
Neber min' whar next you's gwine to
So you's six foot under groun'.

NEGRO LOVE SONG.

I lobes your hands, gal; yes I do.
(I'se gwine ter wed ter-morro'.)
I lobes your earnings thro' an' thro'.
(I'se gwine ter wed ter-morro'.)
Now, heah de truf. I'se mos' nigh broke;
I wants ter take you fer my yoke;
So let's go wed ter-morro'.

Now, don't look shy, an' don't say no.
(I'se gwine ter wed ter-morro'.)
I hope you don't expects er sho'
When we two weds ter-morro'.
I needs er licends—you knows I do—
I'll borrow de price ob de same frum you,
An' den we weds ter-morro'.

How pay you back? In de reg'ler way.
When you becomes my honey
You'll habe myself fer de princ'pal pay,
An' my faults fer de interes' money.
Dat suits you well? Dis cash is right.
So we two weds ter-morro' night,
An' you wuks all de ter-morro's.

———o———

THE NEGRO'S NEW YEAR PRAYER.

A backward glance, a lion's daring,
A long regret, a sage's bearing,
Are the sure steps to onward faring.

To-morrow's luck's to-day's devising,
To-day's to-morrow's ghost uprising,
The future's promise emphasizing.

New Year we reckon thus: Intruder,
The past taught us and left us shrewder,
Wilt thou teach us and leave us ruder?

An age's zeal may make what naught is,
An age's fruit may stop ere aught is,
An age's faith may wane when it sought is.

Not so its gentleness. It measures
The God free-bound in man. It leasures
His restlessness into soul-treasures.

Grant but this boon, New Year, and set us
Above an erring past. There let us
Match stars with faults, lest God forget us.

———o———

RIVALRY.

John an' Mandy's prancin' 'long
  Lak dey's good an' rich;
All her fine clo'es fit up wrong,
  Eb'ry rag an' stitch.
Each one's spahkin' de udder so,
Cyarn't tell how dey lobe will grow.
She mout marry my beau dat wuz,
Don' keer ef she does.

John an' Mandy's 'proachin' neah
  Lak dey means it all;
He's er whisp'rin' so's I heah
  De sweet wo'ds dat fall.
Now ef Mandy knowed ernuff,
An' she warn't so big an' ruff,
I'd gibe her my beau dat wuz;
Trounce me ef I does.

John an' Mandy's standin' still,
His eyes fixed in hers;
Seems ter me dey has one will,
Now dey moufs is burs.
Each one tells de udder dat
It knows 'zackly whar hit's at;
I gibe her my beau dat wuz?
Kill me ef I does.

John an' Mandy's man an' wife;
Parson Grim say so.
He done tied 'em on throo life
'Till de last trump blow.
I'se not gwine ter be er fool,
More big fish is in de pool;
I don' miss er beau dat wuz;
Bless me ef I does.

———o———

HONEY, WHUT'S YOU ASKIN'?

I lobes you lak I used ter do?
Now, honey, whut's you askin'?
Lobe is er b'ilin' 'twixt us two;
So, honey, whut's you askin'?
I sho' lobes you, an' you lobes me,
An' we owns lobes dat mus' ergree;
So, honey, whut's you askin'?

A crow's foot's creepin' 'bout yo' eyes
Now, honey, whut's you askin'?
You know my lobe is blin' an' wise;
So, honey, whut's you askin'?
My lobe lobes yo's an' yo's lobes mine,
An' bofe lobes lobes es in dey prime;
So, honey, whut's you askin'?

Old age is creepin' on erpace?
  Now, honey, whut's you askin'?
Yo' soul keeps house widin yo' face;
  So, honey, whut's you askin'?
De yeahs is simply chisels to
Make lastin' my day-dreams ob you;
  So, good wife, whut's you askin'?

———o———

TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. SALLIE BROWN.

God gives man bent of will and scope of vision
  To weave life's earthy threads into a whole;
And lest he miss a glimpse of things elysian,
  He gives him woman with her heaven-lit soul.

Fame may bedazzle him; alluring power
  May seize a prostrate world and say: "'Tis thine."
This is but chaff beside his nature's dower,
  Woman, to reassure that life's divine.

Woman is weak that she may test man's heart.
  Betimes she's strong that she may test his brain.
In weakness or in strength she plays a part,
  Man's ever-rising worth cannot attain.

Wise unto knowledge that shall spur the thought,
  Wise unto wisdom that shall sweeten prayer;
Wise unto God-like insight who has sought
  To star his darkness with a woman's care.

In life she leads. In death she beckons on
  To higher aims and more completed duty,
Until her vanished self becomes a dawn,
  Reflecting on his path hope, shrined in beauty.

LAZY SAM.

Don' know my name? It's Lazy Sam,
Proud o' dat name. You bet I am.
How did I git it? Guess my mammy
Long time ergo jes' called me Sammy.

Guess all de folks whut heahed ob it
Thought me an' dat name wouldn't fit;
So dey jes' added one whut suits,
Jes' like de heels does ter de boots.

How does I manage ter git so fat?
Yo's mighty 'quisitive ter ax all dat.
I talks fer wuk an' sleeps ter grow,
An' eats fer sauce. Now does you know?

I's mos' nigh tired o' foolin' wid you.
Folks thinks dat I'se got nuthin' ter do,
But tell dem whut I is er ain't,
I'se Lazy Sam. Is you er saint?

Jes' one word mo'? Well, heah it is:
You jes' go 'long an' min' yo' biz.
Be nice an' sweet an' sma't an' ca'm.
An' I'll look atter dis Lazy Sam.

———o———

THE VICIOUS NEGRO.

Dere ain't no 'arthly use I hol' in totin' 'roun' er gun,
When twenty smells de powder, an' de bullets hits
but one,
An' he turns in an' dies befo' de shooter sees de fun.

I uster tote er gun 'long time, until I l'arned ter know
Er nigger's nebber in it 'less he makes up all de show;
So twitch 'im till you draws de crowd, den cyarve 'im high an' low.

He'll p'int his vengeance at you, but he'll 'preciate de fact
Dat you has sense whut shows you how ter mix up blood an' tact,
So folks will allus 'mind him ob his 'lation ter de act.

De coon dat dahs ter 'spute wid me until my blood runs hot
I chokes until his tongue crooks up inter er silent knot.
Den ef he's gen'l'man 'nuff ter stan' I cyarves 'im on de spot.

I don' keer fer yo' pow'ful names er whut yo' 'sitions 'notes,
I only keers fer bre'sts an' ahrms an' heads an' 'vitin' throats,
So I kin cyarve dem reckless wid dis razah dat I totes.

———o———

"DEM PHILLUPEENERS."

Well, Phillupeeners, how's yo' health?
I don' ax how's yo' playin',
I 'specs de angels heahs by stealth
An' coins it in a sayin'.
I 'specs dey's plannin' big ovations;
I 'specs dey'll send sum invitations
To all de music-lovin' nations
To bless you Phillupeeners.

Jes' heah 'em once, an' afterwerds
Yo'll heah 'em, heah 'em ever,
De notes dey plays will come in herds
An' heah 'em, heah 'em ever.
Dey'll fust be best, an' den dey'll flee
Right on to find de next degree,
An' still right on until you see
Music, not Phillupeeners.

If you would live anudder life
An' still live dis you lives heah,
If you would turn yo' loss an' strife
To gains dat always gives heah,
If you would lose yo' appertite
Fer all de things dat plagues de sight,
An' think up straight an' feel upright,
Jes' heah dem Phillupeeners.

De white man plays until you dreams
Yo' life's a kind o' story;
De white man plays until you seems
To peep right into glory.
Dat's good enough. Dis world widout it
Would go wid mournin' wropped about it,
But laziness! He jes' cyarn't rout it,
Like dem brown Phillupeeners.

Heah's to de music dat you plays
Upon dem inst'uments,
Heah's to de music dat you lays
Up fer yo' own contents.
Heah's to yo' sense dat makes yo' luck,
Heah's to yo' Phillupeener pluck,
An' heah's good will from Old Kaintuck
To all you Phillupeeners.

I'SE JES' ER LITTLE NIGGER.

I keeps er sharp eye on de folks I sees—
De big folks dat habe bo't de bery breeze;
But why should I be totin' 'long wid dese?
I'se jes' er little nigger. Dat is all.

I looks in at de glass an' sees er face
Dat 'pears ter say: "De nigger's got er place
He boun' ter keep." Dat quits me frum de race.
I'se jes' er little nigger. Dat is all.

De white boy tug an' wuk an' go th'oo school.
Ob course he kyarn't erford ter be er fool.
But why should I be wuk's obleegin' tool?
I'se jes' er little nigger. Dat is all.

Don' tell me 'bout de good things ober dere;
Fur eb'ry one o' dem is in de air,
An' neber will be sauce ter my po' fare.
I'se jes' er little nigger. Dat is all.

I'se gwine ter habe er good time now, you bets.
Dis world's not gwine ter owe me eny de'ts.
I pities all my folks who wuks an' frets.
I'll be er sho' 'nuff nigger. Dat is all.

———o———

BIG IKE AND LITTLE IKE.

One mawn ole marse, he say ter me:
"Ike, whar you bin las' night?"
"Ole marse," I say, "I climed er tree
An' drinked till I gits tight.
Ole marse, I'se Little Ike, you know,

So Big Ike 'clared he's gwine ter show
Er little nigger's skeered ter do
Sum movements he's gwine ter put 'im throo.

"I clim'ed de tree, ez I sed befo',
  An' Ike, Big Ike, he gaze,
I drinked er pint; now Ike he know
  He tumble off ef he sot dat ways
An' drink dat pint an' brace dat tree,
An' kick dis legs an' rock lack me,
Den twis' hisself erroun' dat lim',
An' go ter sleep in de breeze erswim.

"Now, Ike, he shake dat tree an' me,
  An' down I cums wid de lim',
An' Ike, he laff till he hed ter see
  Dere warn' no laff in him;
Fer me an' de lim' an' de pint wuz dere,
An' Big Ike's cries, dey fill de air,
An' me an' de lim' an' de pint—we three
Jes' press on Ike till he couldn't see."

Den marse, he says: "Well, Ike, how's dat?"
  I looks, an' dere stan' Ike;
Ike say: "You lies! You'll be er cat
  In de big tree on de pike!"
I 'splains ter Ike, an' marse say: "Sin!"
I 'splains ter marse, an' Ike he grin,
I 'splain ter bof, an' bof dem looks
My name clean outen de heabenly books.

Den marse, he says: "Go 'long wid Ike."
  Ike looks, an' den I goes.
I foun' myself flung ober de pike
  On er lim', jes' erlibe wid woes.

Ike oberseed. So he hed all cum
An' bring er fife an' bring er drum.
Dey kicked up dus', an' pranced an' sung
Right under de tree-tops whar I hung.

Ike makes me tell dat lie all ober,
  Ergin an' ergin an' ergin.
My gal wuz dere. "You's got no lober?"
  Ike ax wid er sassy grin.
She shake her haid, den take de han'
Ob Pete, my ribal. He take her fan,
An' all prance off wid er look at me
Dat said: "Grow inter de lim' ob de tree."

———o———

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

(*To my friend, R. W. Thompson.*)

Heah, ole ooman! Heah is me,
Den cum wid yo' Chris'mus tree.
Heah, ole ooman! Whar's you at?
Shake de snow offen my hat.
Stir de fiah an' let it blaze,
Winter's habin' techey ways.
Rub one ear, an' I'll rub tudder;
Patience gone, an' don't keer nudder.

Lak ter miss dis Chris-mus tree.
All de rich folks dat I see
Wuz er buyin' at dey ease
All de playthings an' de trees.
Last I bo't dis little one;
Now our Liz kin habe sum fun.
Rich folks, dey owns all creation,
Sabe de po' folks' po' relation.

Met our naber cumin' 'long
Wid er tree not wuth er song.
He wuz braggin' all de while
'Bout his tree an' 'bout his chile.
You could lose his tree in dis
Jes' lak sorrer's lost in bliss;
An' de chile whut he wuz praisin'
Won't be wuth de trouble o' raisin'.

Now, de tree is in its place,
Kiber up our darlin's face.
Kiber up her hands an' feet,
Don't her toes look nice an' sweet?
Musten' let her eben heah
Ob de good things whut is neah.
Is my talk er gittin' louder?
Well, I'se proud an' gittin' prouder.

B'lieve I'll take her out o' bed,
An' hol' up her sleepy haid
Ter de things up on de tree,
Co'se she'll not erwake ter see.
Cum heah, darlin'. Look up dar!
Eb'ry playthin' is er star
Shinin' down on you ter please you.
Sleepin' still? I b'lieve I'll tease you.

Tickle all yo' little toes,
Kiss you on yo' stumpy nose,
Run my fingers throo yo' haih,
Loos'nin' all de kinks up dar.
Rub yo' black face 'g'inst my own
Till you cries: "Let me erlone."
Is you 'wake? You is an' sholy
Looks lak angels whut is holy.

Eat dis candy an' dis cake.
Blow dis horn an' keep erwake.
Take hol' ob dis jumpin' jack,
Scatter 'roun' dis little pack.
Use dis pencil an' dis slate,
Wid 'em l'arn ter calkerlate;
Kiss yo' doll an' kiss her tresses,
An' her hat an' all her dresses.

Sleep ergin? Well, I'se bin mean—
Meanest dad you you's eber seen.
Ef you dar's fall out wid me
I'se gwine rob yo' Christ-mus tree.
Gwine ter cry? Yo' teahs is sweet,
Lak de toes whut slits you feet.
Take dis chile, good wife, an' wrop it
Warm in bed befo' I whop it.

———o———

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS.

I is fifty, more er less, an' it's cuttin' ter my pride
Not ter know ef I is stationed on de lower er upper side,
But I hopes I'se on de lower wid er gap dat's good an' wide.

I has alluz bin er lober, an' I alluz has bin jilted.
All de nos I has rece'bed would make er quilt, full stuffed an' quilted;
So my co'tin's but er mem'ry, an' my pride is kinder wilted.

Dese is strokes dat makes de wise men scratch dey nakid pates an' wunder,

Dese is strokes dat men in gin'ral 'fuse ter libe an' stan' up under,
Dese is strokes dat robs de lightnin' ob de right ter owe de thunder.

Dar is strokes dat is more pow'ful den yo' l'arnin's institutions.
Dey jes' grin's you till you feels lak you's de four win's distributions.
Dey is tryin' ter walk de chalk line ob yo' New Yeah resolutions.

Knowed 'er man who swahed 'fo' gracious he wuz gwine ter libe up higher
Den de swillin' ob' good licker till he kilt de base desire;
An' he ended full ob whisky 'cross de back log in de fiah.

Knowed er nuther man who sed he would fergibe his enemies,
An' he started out ter do it jes' es happy es you please;
But he foun' without opponents he could neber be at ease.

Why dis strikin' out at randum,, when dis talk is all fer me?
I has practiced resolutin' on de lan' an' on de sea
Till my failures fin's me guilty on de charge ob perjury.

I is sho' my heart is tender, an' I wants ter mend my ways.
I jes' lobes ter heah folks singin', an' I 'oners folks dat prays.
But frum New Yeah resolutin' I is free de res' my days.

'Cause you see I'se tried de ole ones till I'se put 'em
all ter rout;
An' ef new ones probed successful dey would leabe
my min' in dou't,
Ef it eber could grow wise enuff ter fin' my new self
out.

———o———

REPORTING THE SERMON.

Heahed er sermon tudder night
Frum de Reb'rent Rastus White.
You wus dar? Don' I know dat?
Seed you sportin' yo' new hat.
Seed you lookin' 'roun' er-bout
So's ter pick sum feller out,
Whut wuz bol' er-nuff ter spy on
De same gal you had yo' eye on.

Reb'rent Rastus weahs er face
Dat is allus sayin' grace.
Reb'rent Rastus' veins ain't blue?
Don' I know dat well as you?
An' I know no udder man
Kin be foun' in all de lan'
Whut kin go frum de beginnin'
Ter de en' ob all yo' sinnin'.

Reb'rent Rastus tuk er tex',
Couldn't tell whut would cum nex'?
Dar you cum er-puttin' in.
Darky, you speak up ergin
An' my fist'll fin' er spot
On yo' jaw an' keep it hot
Till you l'arn ter know dat knowin'
Ain't er thing ter be allus showin'.

Whut's dis worl' er-comin' to
Ef one cyarn't go right on through
Wid er speech he's boun' ter make
'Stid ob stoppin' fer yo' sake?
Now, I'se gwine ter tell you how—
(Needn't 'gin to scrape an' bow)
Reb'rent Rastus sot us thinkin'—
Take my boot-toe fer dat blinkin'!

Yes, he lead us all ter see
Dis worl's full ob misery,
An' ter spy de better lan'—
Whut you got dar in yo' han'?
Dat's right, pardner, hol' it up,
Ain't you got er glass er cup?
My taste's allus monstrus frisky
When I sees Kaintucky whisky.

Whar's de res' dat speech, you say?
Brudder Rastus cumin' dis way,
He kin make it bettern me,
An, you's boun' ter wait ter see,
Kase I'se got dis bottle, pard,
An' I'se gwine ter strike it hard.
Chunk me, chunk me all you please ter
I'se got glory heah ter freeze ter.

Gibe you sum? Jes' wait er bit.
Maybe I mought habe er fit.
Long's I keep my common sense
I'll not put on no pretense.
I'll jes' drink until I rise
Ter sum sort ob paradise.
Rastus cumin'? B'liebe I'll bore him.
Dar's de empty bottle 'fore him.

Let us hide heah in dese weeds.
Rastus, Rastus, show yo' deeds.
Now he's lookin' on de groun',
Now he's list'nin' fer sum soun',
Now he's hid it in his clothes,
Now he's stuck it ter his nose,
Now he smacks his lips an' shows dat
He would like ter know whar mo's at.

Thoo dat bottle held er drouf
Rastus, you mus' hol' yo' mouf.
Ef you 'spouse de temp'rence cause,
We's gwine be both jedge an' laws.
You's wid us? You better be.
Cum right on an' let us see.
Bress de Lawd fer dis chance meetin',
We's dun drunk. Now, let's ter eatin'.

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